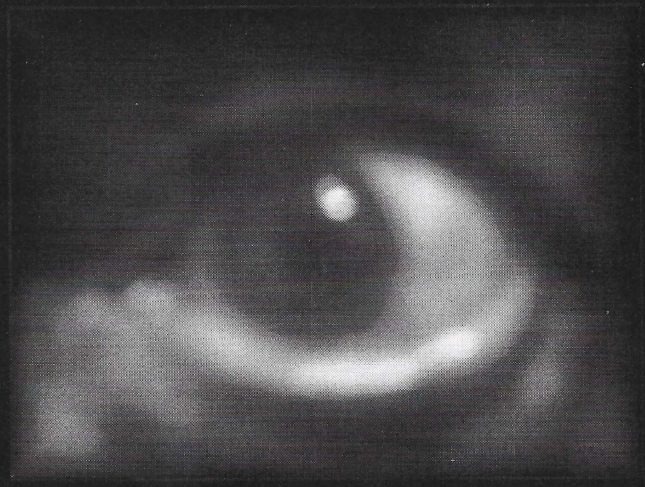


COLD SUN



DARK SHADOWS

geometric, sonic painting with poetry over it, projected by a type of light emanating outward from inward by peyote...

Billy Bill Miller talks exclusively to TimeLordMichalis

TimeLord Michalis: So, it's Cold Sun or Dark Shadows? (There's so much saying going on about the band's name, thanks to you and your 'at times' quotes)

Billy Bill Miller: The name was always Cold Sun although we did do one gig using the name of the former band, "Amethyst". We used that name that one last time because we had not yet thought of a name. I think Led Zeppelin called themselves "The Yardbirds" early on until they came up with the new name. It was similar with us. I had already thought of "Cold Sun" but wanted to hold out for a better name. I would not have called it "Dark Shadows" because there was a TV show with that name but I certainly would have liked to call it that. We had a long list on the wall of prospective names. Finally we settled on Cold Sun because we could not continue indefinitely with no name at all. When I was dealing with Rich Haupt in the early 90's I had mentioned "Dark Shadows". It was his idea to use it as a title for which I am still Grateful...

TLM: What about the Rockadelic inserts which clearly call the band, Dark Shadows?

B: Those were written by a publicist who had worked with Roky and also with me previously under the pseudonym of 'Arthur Bloch'. The info about Cold Sun came from me, since 'Arthur Bloch' had never heard of Cold Sun. I had kept it well hidden. I figured that if it is my band then the name is whatever I say it is. I had said that I never heard of Cold Sun - though it was known to the writer of the liners that I was trying

to re-write the name. It just seemed like a good idea - I really DO like "Dark Shadows" better.

TLM: Going back in time ('65-'66), to see where was everything started, we find a teenager Bill Miller hanging around in Austin, right? People say you were a freak! ...

B: I guess I thought I was pretty incognito. I suppose I got better at being incognito a little later when I had more reason to be. Hey, Michalis... I wanted to mention that I think these are GREAT questions!



TLM: By the way, you were known as Bill back then, I guess, and later Billy. Why Billy Bill now?

B: Billy Bob and Billy Ray and Billu Joe were already taken.

TLM: OK. I understand. I just wondered... Billy Bill sounds a bit odd, but, HEY! This is Rock n Roll, after all. What got you into music? Tell us a few things about Cauldron.

B: My first bands were cover bands. I was

the lead singer. I was pretty good at sounding just like Keith Relf, lead singer of the Yardbirds. The Yardbirds were not an influence on me. I just have a similar voice. I also played harmonica. I had the autoharp but I considered it a toy and never used it. It was in 1968 that I discovered a whole musical universe within that little old sawed off piano... But, back to 1965 and 1966... I was writing songs and poems but not performing them with any of these cover bands... As for influences, I really loved the Joe Meek stuff but had very limited access to it. Of course "Telstar" is the crowning moment of my first transistor pocket sized radio experiences. "Cauldron" was an early Make Shift name for "Amethyst" when we had a sudden gig at a HUGE anti-war rally. This was during the first National Strike Week.

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High on peyote I could see something beyond the crowd of 5,000... something in the sky... like an Aurora Borealis - I now believe it was the first trace of the singularity calling to me... My first gig with the autoharp was a crowd of thousands - an angry crowd which we did our best to make even more angry. John Kearney and Tom McGarrigle were in that band. John came up with the name "Cauldron". Tom came up with "Amethyst". My girl friend had suggested "Dark Shadows" which I liked the best but there was a TV show of the same name so we didn't use that name. Maybe we should have anyway...

TLM: Is there a reason why you choose the autoharp, a 'folk' instrument?

B: It occurred to me that if Jerry Lee Lewis had used a sawed off piano fitted with guitar and bass pickups he might have been even wilder and louder. I was looking for a new type of amplified keyboard. Guitars were also folk instruments. It was some alternate universe thing - probably the Joe Meek influence... When I got the autoharp I discovered it can't do all these sounds - 2 years later I realized it IS possible after all - I have very tough fingers. I had been playing bass - so my fingers were BARELY tough enough to avoid being shred to pieces - and I explored a new universe... A girl I

were not a big influence. I did see them many times. In studio recordings and rehearsal tapes when you can hear Roky and I both speaking it is sometimes hard for me to tell us apart - I sound similar to him. I wish I had a voice as good as his instead of similar - but I guess everyone who sings wishes they had as powerful a voice as Roky Erickson... The Elevators influenced me in the sense of showing me what a band could get away with. But they really did not get away with anything, did they? They inspired me to do whatever possible to help Roky avoid repeating their mistakes... I DO feel that a lot of things occurred in my life that centered around their shows - which were the

popular today. The members of and songs of Cold Sun were assembled to record an album. Amethyst was assembled to do gigs and possibly go from there into recordings. I really didn't want Cold Sun to play live until an album release - I guess I got my wish all these years later when we played The Austin Psych fest. Back in the early days of Cold Sun I guess I did allow these guys to hen peck me into playing live. Mike Waugh, to his credit was not gonna hen peck anyone. I regret not getting John Kearney back into the new line-up. I should never have allowed any cry babies a foot in the door. There's just no percentage in it. Give 'em an inch and they'll take 1,000 meters.



knew told me that the autoharp might have hidden potential - which I already believed true. She also told me I looked more like a singer and should explore the autoharp secretly until I am some day in a band with a singer other than me. She was right. She left Austin and became a Rock star. Somehow I listened to her and she was right... In 1968 another girl, my girl friend, urged me to start a band. It was shortly after that when I switched from bass to the autoharp. I still use heavy bass strings and make lots of heavy bass sounds with the autoharp. I think the people at the Psych Fest were surprised at the big sounds.

TLM: I read somewhere that while in Amethyst, you used to play "See What You Cause". Was this the first song you wrote?

B: We did play "See What You Cause". It was far from being the first song I wrote but it was the first one that the band worked up.

TLM: What was your opinion about The 13th Floor Elevators, back then? I guess you saw them live during their 'high glory' years, '66 - '67... Were there an influence?

B: Contrary to what people have said, they

hip rock events - seemed like a hip scene at first. Recently I've played the songs that Powell St. John wrote for them. It's a project called, "Powell St. John And The ALIENS". Yes, I can imitate that jug effect very well with the autoharp.

TLM: Velvet Underground... Lou Reed... An early influence, too? Other influences?

B: Yes, The Velvets were an early influence. AND so was Lou Reed and also The Fugs. So was Joe Meek and Max Crook and Del Shannon.

TLM: What about Amethyst? Can you describe the facts in every detail you wish (and can remember, of course) that leads from Amethyst to Cold Sun?

B: I remember all details. You really want all details I can remember? This will take 2 years to read if I do.

TLM: Well, OK. Just stick to the progression from Amethyst to Cold Sun.

B: OK. Cold Sun had newer and better songs and a phenomenal bass player and a more prog drummer. Cold Sun was more punk and at the same time more prog, something that makes it more unusual and

TLM: How you got the eye of Bill Josey - owner of KAZZ FM and Austin's only Record label Sonobeat?

B: John Ike Walton told him about me.

TLM: The Sonobeat Tapes... Recorded in a period of 6 months. Can you describe us (in every detail you wish) this 6 month period? I believe that it might be the most creative in your life...

B: It was not the most creative period in my life but now I realize it was important to my future and see things within it that could not be seen until time had passed. Things that have happened since then cause me to look at those days with fondness. What if I could change the past? Who says the past does not already change? Roky Erickson certainly does not say that and neither do I! I do believe the path to editing time lies in the future, the NEAR future and, Yes, It's all what "Here In The Year" is about... I'd be glad to describe these sessions in detail including the song construction and writing which was also happening outside the studio. The first detail should be also the greatest reason it badly needed to be re-mastered.

TLM: So, after your 'adventure' with *The Aliens and Roky*, how you spent the years till nowadays?

B: I've worked in videos as yet unreleased - projects from the 80's that will be on YouTube sooner or later... I had a band where I was lead singer called "Cat People". I joined Blood Drained Cows and we recorded an album produced by Andy Shernoff, notorious producer and leader of The Dictators. It's called "13". Blood Drained Cows is the brain child of Gregg Turner, leader of the infamous Angry Samoans in the late 70's through 80's. Gregg and I are about to record his latest project in Nashville. Andy Shernoff is producing. It should be great... I have a new album coming out soon with The Myonics. We play a lot in California. I did a gig last night in San Francisco. We sounded great. The Myonics is the brain child of our fearless leader, Jasper Leach. Jasper is also the new musical director of Cold Sun.

TLM: You are the autoharpist of Blood Drained Cows and The Myonics and also Powell St. John And The ALIENS. Is this the actual Alien band that backed Roky?

B: Alright. It is the original Roky's ALIENS indeed back together again recently to back Powell in live shows and in the studio. I think it's great to be back with Duane Aslaksen, my partner, my brother and here we are working again on the greatest songs ever. I do consider Powell and Roky to be that great!

TLM: Were you satisfied with the initial release of Rockadelic's LP in 1989? Would you like to share with us anything else about this? I read somewhere that they tried so hard to convince you to let them release that album.

B: It was not a release at all but a special PRIVATE collector's edition only. Only a small circle could obtain it. If people want to call it a release I can't prevent it but I cannot imagine why this elite group of collectors would want to call it something that only lowers the monetary value of it. I had no intention of releasing it but Rich Haupt was able to explain to me that it would

ONLY be vinyl and I thought that surely people might make cassettes of it but never took cassettes seriously. Neither Rich nor I knew that CD burners would exist in the foreseeable future. Rich made me understand that it would make people happy. I never assumed that Mike Ritchey would have any input into it or I just would not have done it. I should have been more clear with Rich and it's my fault I was not, not his. I'm very pleased with it now. Now is a different world. Mike's a fine musician but not an A and R guy.

TLM: Also, World In Sound Records, did an excellent work in releasing the album in 2008.

B: I won't argue with that!

TLM: I would like from you to tell us a few things about the new stuff you're into, these days...I'm talking about 'Rites of Osiris'.

B: I refuse to do that! No, just kidding. I'd LOVE VERY MUCH to talk about it... "Rites Of Osiris" is the title track and it is the last song that I wrote before I decided to stop writing and it took 5 years to write. It is dedicated to Luna Wilson, the late daughter of writer Robert Anton Wilson. It should properly be called "Rites Of Isis" but the bird headed image is more to my liking and seems more ironic and fitting. Also the autoharp does quite a bit of 'squawking' bird like sounds in this song. It's like a sequel to "Ra-Ma" and "Here In The Year" and is about immortality and mentions those who will be destroyed in the coming singularity. Did I forget to mention that this is a cult? And I'm the Leader! Don't be afraid, Michalis. I won't hurt you. I'll make you a God. I'll bet you never had any payola this big, huh. Want your own planet to rule while we're at it? Any thing is possible. You're in with the really IN in crowd now, bro!

TLM: On the 1st of May 2011, for the first time in 39 years, Cold Sun - Miller, McGarrigle, and original bassist Mike Waugh, with Blood Drained Cows drummer Tom Trusnovic and musical director Jasper Leach (also leader of The Myonics) - gave a live concert as they headlined at The Austin Psych Fest on a Sunday evening... How did it go?

B: We reunited in Sebastopol, California to record the new album with drummer Mike Vattoune. I really did not even consider doing the Psych Fest. The Black Angels contacted me and at one point I changed my mind since we needed to test the live show if we are to tour Europe to support the new album as World In Sound would like for us to do. Then getting ready for that show was a way to test the live show and it went well. Also, the occasion of the Psych fest publicity was an excellent opportunity to announce the new album. I really disliked a few the local news media people in Aus-



The Blood Drained Cows
L to R Russell Miller, Gregg Turner,
Billy Angel and Tom Trusnovic



The Myonics
Brian Davy - drums, synth / Nat
Futterman - trumpet / Jasper Leach
- vocals, various / Tom Meagher -
guitar, vocals / Billy Miller - electric
autoharp / Eric Mohammed - bass.



Powell St. John and The Aliens

tin implying that we "re-grouped" to play the Psych Fest. If we re-grouped to play the Psych Fest then WHO was it that played on that new album we just recorded? Nobody would re-group just to play one gig, at least nobody I know. Why on Earth or any place else would anyone do that? But there were communications glitches because the festival was bigger than ever and the location of the venue was really gigantic... I thought it went well. These old guys are not exactly what I'm accustomed to these days but I had my young Turks whip them... uhh... EASE them into shape. Mike Waugh is more FANTASTIC than ever. He creates an ever evolving plane that everything else strides over like horses of the apocalypse in the form of dragons while Tommy and I descend as squawking birds. These are far better songs. They were written a few years af-



Billy Miller (electric autoharp)
Powell St John and the Aliens @The
Hotel Utah, San Francisco
14-December-2008

ter the "Dark Shadows" songs with the title track, "Rites Of Osiris" written last. It took five years to write but the others were written pretty fast... Sometimes it just works out that way.

TLM: Anything last to add?

B: My lady at that time and I both had visions of the singularity. It seemed to energize us and reach out and grab us from the future, It's really happening and soon. The fools who perpetuate the status quo will never believe it's real until it's too late for them to escape. Sure, peyote was a part of the electrical wave that enabled me to see this.

We did not know what it was that we were seeing. Over the years it has become clear as each thing she predicted has come true. This includes many things that made little or no sense to us at the time. We could see it but could not understand it. What I thought of as poetry was really visions of the future. I rejected and reviled this because it seemed capable of destroying us. More recently I have come to understand it better and realize that what I once thought of as a dreaded enemy was my greatest friend and guardian angel all along. The most sober and serious people in the world believe in the singular-

ity. I'm referring to physicists... This is why I dedicated the title track to the resurrection of Robert Anton Wilson's daughter. "Rites Of Osiris" picks up where "Live Again" left off...

Billy Bill Miller
Cold Sun
September 2011



Cold Sun, Austin
Psych Fest 2011

Discography

as Cold Sun

- Dark Shadows LP 1990 (Rockadelic RRLP 2.5)
- Dark Shadows LP 2008 (World In Sound WIS 1038)

w/Roky Erickson

- Don't Slander Me LP 1986 (Pink Dust 72108-1)

w/Powell St. John

- On My Way Yo Houston 2009 (Tompkins Square)

* Billy Bill Miller also wrote liners for 'G.R. And Full Blown expansion' LP by Gregory Raimo of Gunslingers (France)

w/ Roky Erickson and the Aliens

- Roky Erickson and the Aliens LP 1980 (CBS 84463)
- The Evil One LP 1981 (415 Records)

w/ The Blood Drained Cows

- 13 CD 2003 (Triple X Entertainment)

w/The Myonics

- Digits EP 2010 (Digital Download)

Billy Bill Miller's forthcoming projects

- Cold Sun Live 1972
- Rites Of Osiris (solo album)
- the new Myonics album
- the new Gregg Turner album



Rites Of Osiris

Endless night... ancient stars ...

She haunts the desert wind to find each tainted piece
She softly says the words no one must ever hear
from the immortal dream that wake him up from death.

A thousand years blow like sand.

The form of Imhotep clutches a stolen scroll
And on his darkest day he pledged his soul to kingdom come
Outside there is a bird. He wears a shroud of tears

Rise Again! Back to life again

Rise again... into time again...

to breathe the air and walk the Earth again

Rise Again! The Spring is here again!

Rise Again! Rise Again!

They carried her away... to soak in natron for 70 days...
and be stuffed with sand and spice, preserved for future life
And what of Ardeth Bey? He walks the Cairo streets again

They took him from his grave strung with electric lights
But, in another age... in the unmarked tomb of Ardeth Bey

They wrapped him up in flax and sealed him in alive
They cursed him in his grave; Then they killed the slaves,
chiselled his name away; They were really on his case.

Rise Again! Back to life again

Rise again... to be out here again...

until the world turns into light again

Rise Again! The last new age begins!

Rise Again! Rise Again!

could but we could not understand what we were seeing. These were visions of the future and at one point I thought these words, these lyrics were causing things to happen, dire things. I did not understand many of my own words at the time. I thought these songs could destroy my life and that they were either a danger to me and maybe also to her or that they were just plain stupid. Either way, I was involved with plenty of other projects that I liked better and so I vowed to lock these away forever. I thought I had a special curse, not a special gift. If I hadn't been running a little low on peyote it might have been more clear...

Getting involved with a Goddess, a seer is bound to alter all perceptions.

I decided it could destroy us and decided to stop writing these things. I decided to leave the writing to others. I later realized this was a mistake when things finally came to be that caused the songs to make sense in a more positive light. What I had thought of as an enemy and a curse turned out to be a dear friend and a wonderful blessing. I could see it in my dreams... the eyes looking into the mirror peering out from an iron mask... MY eyes! Sometimes I can think I feel that

iron mask tightening around my face. I was quite struck with the realization that you, Michalis, call yourself "Time Lord Michalis". That name has special meaning...

TLM: Me? Why me?

B: I don't mean you. I just think you're a cool guy but what if you had a radio show that actually does tune in the actual past? I think the singularity will make that not only possible and feasible but child's play... It's in large part what "Here In The Year" is all about...

TLM: I made endless discussions about your music while listening to the album with friends. Some of the 'names' we came across were 'Texas desert psychedelic', 'Dark pure psych', 'scary & cold psychedelia'... Can you describe your music, back then?

B: I LOVE your descriptions! And, Yes, I can describe it. It was geometric. It was sonic painting with poetry over it and was projected by a type of light emanating outward from inward by peyote...

TLM: Those lyrics... Endless lines, full of 'symbolic' meanings, I'm guessing... So, what else inspired you except MU and Lemurian mythology?

B: My girl friend had these visions and I wanted to live in those visions and we did and we were happy to be together and apart from everything else and everyone else and I was mocking the history of a world we never wanted to return to. It made her smile. It made me laugh. I thought I would just fix it all later and ironically I did do that later. Now I see it as a dangerous tale of a hacker who wants to go into the main frame of what projects the thing known as reality... go in and fix a few glitches. I believe it's just beginning, just being born... the new beginning of the new God in the new time with all the old rules destroyed and the followers along with them. I like that line in 'Taxi Driver' where Travis Bickle says, "Some day a REAL rain's gonna come".. Scorsese is a Val Lewton fan. So am I...



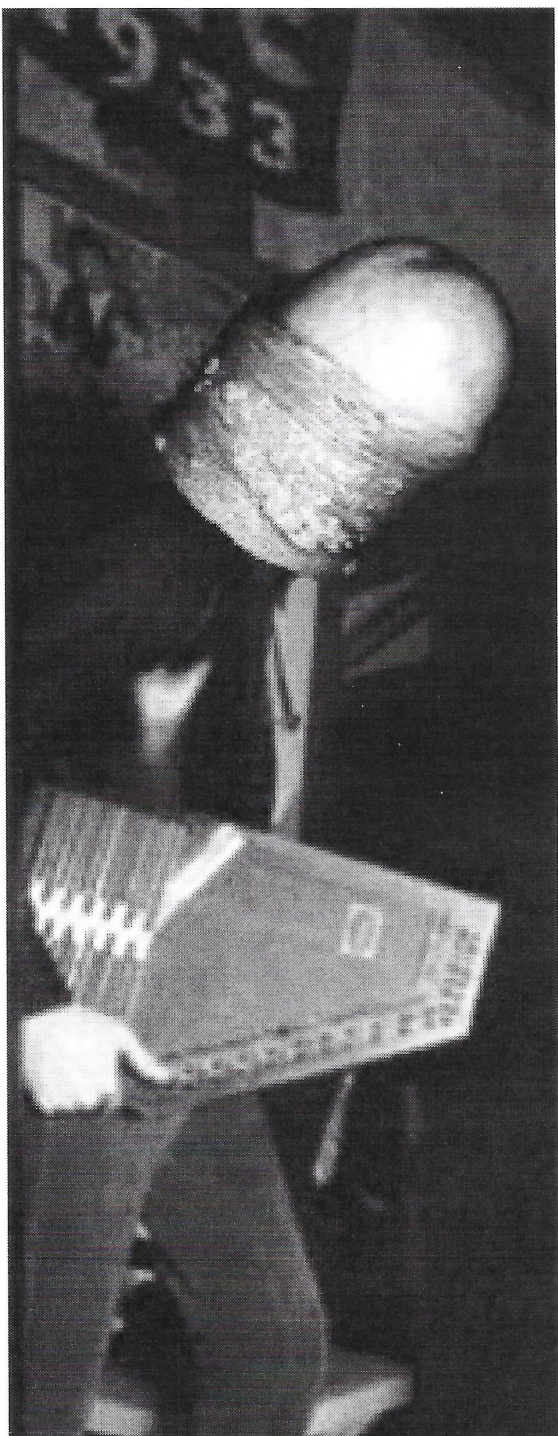
Billy and Roky on a late pic...

TLM: How long after the SonoBeat Sessions did you last as a band?

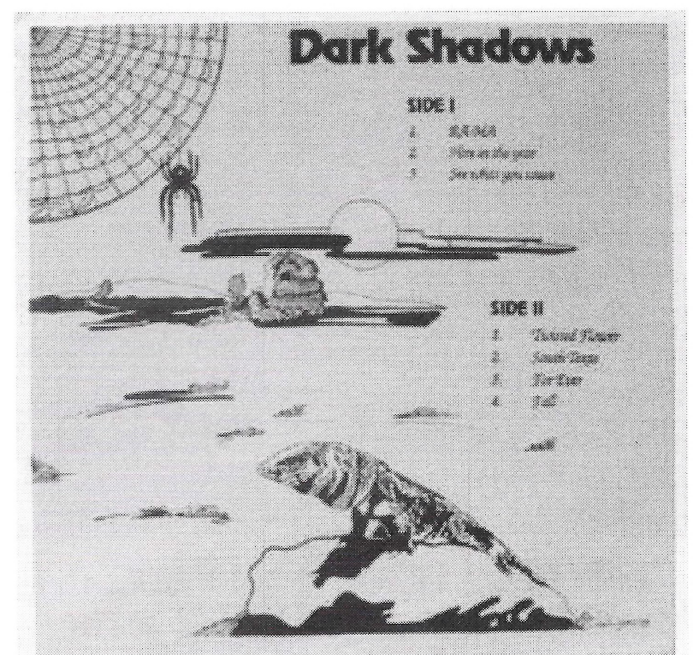
B: 39 years... But we took a break from 1972 until 2011.

TLM: Then Roky came into your life... No, You came into Roky's life, right? How did that happen? Tell us a few things about Bliebalien and the eventually transformation into The Aliens.

B: I'd love to... I hooked up with Roky with no intention of starting a band, I considered Roky a gold mine worthy of a superstar producer. I was mainly working with him on his arrangements and engaged in keeping the local curiosity seekers out of the picture. Then someone offered him a booking which had nothing to do with getting him a development deal, just some live show. I decided not to abandon him and therefore needed a band. I re assembled Cold Sun without the guitarist and put Roky on guitar with the bass leaning heavy in a Jack Bruce direction as Mike Waugh had. Eventually a local musician, Doug Sahm, introduced Roky to his future manager in San Francisco. I quit at that point but still left the door open to change my mind... Roky's new manager assembled The ALIENS and Roky called me on the phone in Memphis. He played me "The Wind And More" over the phone from a rehearsal cassette. I was GREATLY impressed and flew to San Francisco to join the ALIENS and the rest is history...



TLM: People say you were a freak!
Billy: I guess I thought I was pretty incognito...



Rockadelic's special PRIVATE collector's LP edition

The rhythm section and autoharp were recorded on 4 tracks. This was bounced over to two of four tracks of a second four track machine. Then a mix was used on a subsequent four track machine to serve as a backing track for the vocals and anything left over. This was quite standard procedure at the time, the same procedure used by George Martin and Joe Meek and countless others. I was never under the illusion that this Texas producer was any calibre close to Joe Meek or George Martin. The first bounce lost a lot of the bass because Mr. Josey and I were not expert enough to prevent this though we tried. Bill Josey was MORE than qualified to simply record it live as he did Mariani and Johnny Winter, in our case within his new and very fine studio on North Lamar... But this was a concept album requiring more tracks. After this was completed we were able to perform it exactly as it sounds on the recording but we could not do that before we had a recording to emulate in live performance. The loss of much of the brilliant bass was the worst problem and biggest reason I never wanted to see it released until technology was advanced enough to fix it. If that had taken a hundred years it would have been fine with me. What's the hurry? Are we under contract with CBS? NO, we're not under contract at all.

It's been stated that the autoharp and bass were plugged directly into the board. This is true. It's how Joe Meek recorded the bass but Meek was an expert at layering of this type. There WERE some autoharp tracks going through an amp - including ALL the fuzz and distortion of the autoharp and other effects and some straight stuff that sounded better amplified... The vocals were laid over the 6 tracks that were composited into four and bounced onto one to serve as backing. Then the two machines were synced in the final mix. Bill Josey really knew his stuff and was well aware of what was possible. This was, however VERY tricky. My hand was needed in the final mix for the autoharp and guitar while Bill Josey's hand was on the

vocal tracks. The lyrics were being revised and improved right up to near the last minute and in some cases in the studio.

TLM: *The story of how they finally saw the publicity light through the "Dark Shadows" album, after almost 20 years, is pretty known. But, let me ask you a few things about these tapes.*

B: Alright, Michalis. But there was no publicity on the Rockadelic release. No publicity was part of the deal. AND the limited discs sold quickly just like Rich said it would. I was happy to receive NO publicity. I insisted on it and he kept his word.

TLM: *What else is inside those tapes?*

B: I think you mean what other tapes exist, other than the album, right?

suppress and shelve these recordings until that technology was in place and feasible. World In Sound did a great job with the re-mastering.

TLM: *So, what went wrong? I guess you didn't take it seriously enough. Didn't like the demo recordings? Didn't believe in yourselves? What the hell happened and we deprived this stuff for almost 20 years till its final release in 1989?*

B: Again, this was not a Demo. It was a flawed production that has been repaired here in the 21st century... The rest of the answer to your question is very simple. I hooked up with Roky whom I consider to be arguably a better writer and singer than me. So, why would I want this older stuff

on my resume? You see, I took it TOO seriously, if anything. As for the other guys, they had no power in the matter and I had better advisers than them anyway. Of all the people in that picture I did and still would appreciate and be prone to follow the advice of Mike Waugh or John Kearney - but they were pretty cool in the advice department, did not have much advice forthcoming. SO, they were not demo recordings. It was a fully produced album, a concept album, in fact. The songs were performed in that SAME order in all live shows. The production methods did not get a perfect result but I am VERY happy with World

In Sound's re-mastering of these. If it had sounded this good way back then I would not have kept it hidden beyond my period of working with Roky... Despite the sound issues there was something else I suppressed in revealing information because I thought it was too fantastic and that nobody would believe it. Now the world has become fantastic and caught up with this music pretty much. That's why it's current today. ALSO I didn't care if anyone believes it or not. You can give me a lie detector test if you want. But I don't care... So, the dark secret is THIS: My girl friend back then and I were both having visions of the singularity. She could see it more clearly than I



TLM: *YES, that's right. Are they going ever to be released in the future?*

B: It's funny you should ask that. AS a matter of fact, World In Sound will have a release of LIVE stuff on vinyl only. This will precede the release of the new studio album, "Rites Of Osiris".

TLM: *Actually, I guess there's no production ever made to these recordings... Were you satisfied with Josey recording abilities?*

B: As I just detailed, it was a full production but the bottom layers were breached. This project was more ambitious than the Texas producer was able to handle without reducing the number of tracks. I always believed that enhanced re-mastering techniques would exist in the future so I was willing to